



One of Steve Tobin's massive *Steelroots* pieces.

## Sculpting the Landscape

Artist Steve Tobin is known for getting down and dirty. Making bronze casts of forest floors and termite mounds, he appropriates nature as if he were an anthropologist rather than a visual artist. Most recently, he's fashioned large-scale pieces that resemble tree roots shaved clean, their smooth surfaces twisting and overlapping to suggest everything from embracing figures to the vaulting geometry of a cathedral. This month fifteen of Tobin's *Steelroots* sculptures, along with pieces from his *Earth Bronzes* series, grace the twenty-two-acre Conifer Collection of the **Morton Arboretum**, one of the world's great nature museums. Founded in 1922 by Joy Morton, of Morton Salt fame (his father, secretary of agriculture under Grover Cleveland, established the first Arbor Day), the Lisle, Illinois, arboretum is home to 4,117 kinds of trees, shrubs and other plants. Located just twenty-five miles west of Chicago, this impressive 1,700-acre open space allows greenery-starved urbanites to recharge amid woodlands, restored prairie and formal gardens. *The Steelroots sculptures are on display from April 9 through January 2011. [mortonarb.org](http://mortonarb.org).*

THOMAS CONNORS